

Fresh Vegetable Fun Facts

Cauliflower

The name cauliflower means cabbage flower; it is in the same family as cabbage, broccoli, kale, brussels sprouts and Bok Choy (Chinese cabbage). Almost all the cauliflower grown in the U.S. is from the Salinas Valley, California. Cauliflower is high in fiber, Vitamin C and B6.

Broccoli

Broccoli was first grown in the Italian province of Calabria Italy, more than 2000 years ago. Broccoli is from the Latin word for branch or arm. It is a cruciferous vegetable in the cabbage family. Broccoli has ounce for ounce as much calcium as milk. It is highly recognized for its anti-cancer nutrients. Americans have grown broccoli in their gardens for only 200 years.

Fresh Fruit Fun Facts

Red Bartlett Pears

Red Bartlett pears are sometimes called the summer pear because they are one of the first varieties to be harvested in August. They taste the same as regular pears.

They were discovered in the State of Washington in 1938. A branch of a Bartlett tree had all red pears on it; it was cut off and planted, and now produces only red pears. So by taking starts from that one tree we have orchards of red Bartlett pear trees today.

Pineapple

The pineapple is a native to Brazil and Paraguay. Christopher Columbus found pineapples on a Caribbean Island and took them back to Spain in 1493. The Spanish word for pineapple is Pina, because they look like pine cones. The first pineapples arrived in England in 1660. The Spanish introduced the first pineapples to Hawaii.

Hawaii is now the third largest producer of pineapple in the world. Each plant only produces one pineapple. It takes 18 months to grow a pineapple large enough to harvest. A pineapple is ripe if one of its top center leaves can easily be pulled out. Then it is ready to eat. If the pineapple is left to its own device they can reach up to 20 lbs. Del Monte has been growing pineapple in Hawaii since 1917. In 2005 in Hawaii, 212,000 tons of pineapple was produced.

Grapes

Grapes date back to as early as 6000 BC in the region between the Black and Caspian Seas.

In 1769, Spanish explorers in California planted a European grape known as mission grapes, because they were planted in all the Spanish missions in California. There are more than 50 varieties of grapes grown in the state, with California producing 97 % of all grapes grown in the U.S. Grapes are also grown in Arizona, Michigan and New York.

Concord grapes are one of only three fruits that are native to the U.S. The other two fruits are cranberries and blueberries. Every person in the U.S. eats approximately 8 lbs. of grapes in a year. Unlike many fresh fruit, grapes are fully ripe when harvested; they do not become sweeter.

Kiwi Fruit

Kiwi fruit has been known for 700 years. It has only been available in the U.S. since the 1960's. It is from China and was called Yangtao, but when it was brought to New Zealand the named was changed to Kiwi fruit because it looked so much like the national bird of that country, the Kiwi.

California is the only state to grow Kiwi fruit in the U.S.

Watermelon

Watermelon is really a vegetable. It is related to the pumpkin, cucumber and the squash. It is fat free and low in calories. All parts of the watermelon are edible.

China is the world's largest producer of watermelons. It is a native to southern Africa; and was brought to China in boats by slaves and planted in China.

First recorded harvest of watermelon took place in Egypt over 5000 years ago. It is depicted in the Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was placed in the tombs of the kings to nourish them in the afterlife.

The largest watermelon grown in the U.S. was in 1990 in the state of Tennessee, it weighed 262 lbs.

Navel Oranges

Navel oranges look like they have a belly button, but really that navel is another orange starting to grow. In 1873 three navel orange trees were brought to Riverside, California from Brazil. One of the three trees is still alive and producing fruit. That makes the tree 132 years old. Wow!!!

Fuji Apples

The Japanese apple, known as the Fuji, took the U.S. by storm in the 1980's. It is not really known how they got their name. Some people say it is the name of the town that they come from. Some people also say the Fuji is named for Mount Fuji.

Fuji apples are a late-season apple, often harvested in late September and October. Tens of thousands of varieties of apples are grown worldwide. The history of apple consumption dates back to the Stone Age, cultivated in the area we now know as Austria and Switzerland.

Bananas

A fun fact about bananas is that if you have a mosquito bite rub the inside of a banana peel on the bite. It is amazingly successful at reducing the swelling and irritation. You can polish black shoes with a banana peel too.

Bananas are good for so many things; it helps with digestion, headaches, and even helps to fight off the common cold.

A lot more people are saying a banana a day keeps the doctor away.

Strawberries

There is a legend that strawberries were named in the 19th century by English children who picked the fruit, and strung them on grass straw, selling them as straws of berries.

If all the strawberries grown this year were laid berry to berry, they would wrap around the world 15 times.

California harvests 83 % of all strawberries grown in the U.S., approximately 24, 000 acres.

Tangerines

Tangerines are from China where they have been grown for over 3000 years on trees that grow 15 to 20 feet tall. They are also known as Mandarin oranges. They got their name from Tangier, Morocco. They are also nicknamed the Christmas Orange, because they were often stuffed in children's stocking.

They were shipped from that port to England in the 16th century. China produces more tangerines than any other country. Florida and California produce most of the tangerines grown in the U.S

They are easier to peel than an orange, even though they are in the same family.